A PITVOVS *LAMENTATION*

OF THE MISERABLE ESTATE OF THE CHVRCHE

of Chriſt in Englande, in the time of the late reuolt from the goſpel, wherin is conteyned a learned compariſon betwene the comfortable doctrine of the goſpell, & the traditions of the popiſh religion: with an inſtruction how the true Chriſtian ought to behaue himſelf in the tyme of tryall. Wrytten by that worthy martyr of god Nicolas Rydley, late Byſſhoppe of London.

Neuer before this tyme imprynted.

Wherevnto are alſo annexed certayne letters of John Careles, wrytten in the tyme of his impriſonment.

Peruſed and allowed according to the Quenes Maieſties Iniunctions.

LAS, what myſery is thy churche broughte vnto (O Lord) at this daye? Where of late ỹ word of the Lord was truely preached, was redde and hearde in euery towne, in euery churche, in euery village, yea almoſte in euery honeſt mans houſe: alas nowe is it exiled & baniſhed out of the whole Realme. Of late whoo was not glad to be taken for a louer of Goddes worde, for a reader, for a redy hearer, and for a learner of the ſame: & now (alas) who dare beare any open coũtenance toward it, but ſuch as are content in Chriſtes cauſe & for his wordes ſake to ſtand to the daunger & loſſe of all that they haue?

Of late there was to be founde of euery age, of euery degree and kynd of people, that gaue their dilygence to learne as they coulde out of gods woorde, the articles of the chriſtian fayth, the commaundmentes of god

and the lords prayer. The babes and younge chyldren were taught these things of their parents, of their maisters, & weekely of their curates in euery churche: & the aged folke whyche had ben brought vp in blindenes and in ignorauncе of those thynges whyche euery christian is bounde to knowe, when otherwyse they coulde not, yet they lerned the same by often hearyng their chyldren and seruants repeating the same: But now, alas, and alas again, the false prophets of Antechrist which are past all shame, do openly preach in pulpets vnto the people of God that the catechisme is to be counted heresy: whereby they olde blindenesse is broughte home agayne: for the aged are afrayd of the higher powers, and the youthe is abashed & ashamed euen of that which they haue lerned, though it be Gods worde and dare no more meddle.

Of late in euerye congregation throughout all England was made prayer & petition vnto God to be deliuered from the tyrannye of the by-

shop of Rome and all his detestable enormities: from all false doctryne and heresie: And now alas, Sathã hath perswaded Englãd by his falshed and crafte to reuoke her old godly prayer, to recant the same, & prouoke the fearefull wrath and indygnation of god vpon her owne pate.

Of late by straite lawes and ordinaunces, with the consent of the nobles and commonaltie, and ful agrement and counsaile of the prelates & clergie, was banished hence the beast of Babylon, with lawes, I say, and with othes and al meanes that then couide be deuysed for so godly a purpose: But now alas, all these lawes are troden vnder foote: the nobles, the commonaltie, the prelates & clargie are quite chaunged and all those othes though they were herein made in iudgement, iustice and truth, and the matter neuer so good, dothe no more holde then a bond of rushes, or of a barley strawe, nor publyke periurie no more fearethe them then a shadowe vppon the wall.

Of late it was agreed in England of all handes, according to Paules doctrine and Chryſtes commaundement, as Paule ſaythe playne, that nothinge oughte to be doone in the church in the publike congregation, but in that tongue which the congregation coulde vnderſtande, that all might be edified therby, wheather it were common praier, adminiſtratiõ of the ſacramẽts, or any other thinge belonging to the publike myniſterie of gods holy and wholſome woordẽ: but alas all is turned vpſidedowne. Paules doctrine is put aparte: Chriſtes commaundemente is not regarded: for nothing is hearde commonly in the Churche but in a ſtraunge tongue that the people doth nothing vnderſtande.

Of late all men and women were taught after Chriſts doctrine to pray in that tongue which they could vnderſtand, that they might pray with harte, that whiche they ſhuld ſpeake with their tongue: Nowe, alas, the vnlearned people is brought in that

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blyndeneſſe agayne, to thyncke that they p?aye, when they ſpeake wyth their tongue, they can not tel what, no? wherof: their harte is nothynge myndefull at all, fo? that it can vnderſtande neuer a whyt therof.

Of late the lo?des ſupper was duely miniſtred and taughte to be made common to all that were true Chry-ſtians, with thankes geuing and ſettinge fo?the of the Lo?des death and paſſion, vntil his returninge agayne to iudge bothe quicke and deadde: But nowe alas, the Lo?des table is quyte ouerthrowen, and that whych ought to be common to all godly, is made p?iuate to a fewe vngodly, with out any kinde of thankeſgeuinge, o? any ſettinge fo?th of the lo?ds death at all, that the people is able to vnderſtande.

Of late all that were endued with the light and grace of vnderſtanding of goddes holye myſteries, did bleſſe god which had b?oughte them out of that ho?rible blyndeneſſe and ignoraunce, whereby in tymes paſte be-

inge ſeduced by Satans ſubteltyes, they beleued that the ſacrament was not the ſacrament, but the thynge it ſelfe, whereof it is a ſacramente: that the creature was the creatour, and that the thynge whiche hathe neyther lyfe nor ſenſe (alas ſuche was the horryble blyndenes) was the Lorde hym ſelfe, whiche made the eye to ſee, and hath gyuen al ſenſes and vnderſtandynge vnto man. But nowe alas, Englande is returned agayn lyke a dogge to her owne vomyt and ſpuynge, and is in worſe caſe then euer ſhe was: for it had ben better neuer to haue knowen the truthe then to forſake the truth once receyued and knowen. And nowe, not onely that light is turned into darknes, and goddes grace is receyued in vayne, but alſo lawes of deathe are made by hygbe court of parliamente maſterfully to maineteine by ſworde fyer and al kind of violence that heinouſe Idolatry wherin that adoratiō is genē vnto the lyueles and dum creature, whiche is onely dew vnto

the euerlyuynge God: yea they saye they can and do make of breade bothe man and god by theyr transubstantiation. O wicked inuention, and Sathans owne broode.

Of late was the Lordes cuppe at his table distributed according to his owne commaundement by his expresse wordes in his gospell as well to the laytie as to the clergie, which order Christes churche obserued soo manye hundreth yeres after (as al the auncient ecclesiasticall writers do testyfie) without contradictiō of any one of them that can be shewid vnto this day. But nowe, alas, not onely the lordes commaundemente is broken, his cuppe is denied to his seruantes, to whom he commaunded it shuld be distributed, but also with the same is set vppe a new blasphemous kynd of sacrifyce, to satisfye & paie the pryce of synnes, bothe of the deade and of the quicke, to the great and intolerable contumely of Christ our sauyour his death & passion, whiche was and is the one onely sufficient and e-

uerlastinge auaylable sacrifice satisfactorie for al the electes of god, from Adam the fyrst, to the laste that shal be borne in the ende of the worlde.

Of late that commaundemente of god, thou shalt not make to thy selfe any grauen ymage, nor any similytude or lykenes of any thyng in beauen aboue, or in earth beneath, or in the water vnder the earth, thou shalt not bowe down to them nor worship them: this comaundment of God (I say) was grauen almost euery where in churches, was learned of euery body bothe younge and olde: wherupon Images that prouoked the symple and ignorant people vnto idolatry (as the wise man saith) were taken out of the churches, and straytly forbidden that none should any wher eyther bowe downe to them or worshippe them: But now alas goddes holy woorde is blotted and rased out of churches, and stockes and stones are set vppe in the place therof. God commaunded his woorde so to be ordered that it mighte be had in contynuall

nuall remembrance at all times and in euery place: and on the otherside he forbad ymages and idoles so to be eyther made or set in any place wher any shoulde bowe or worshyp them: But now alas, that which god commanded is not passed vpon, and that whiche he forbyddeth is masterfully maintained by falshed and craft, and wickedly vpholden.

Of late al ministers that were admitted to the publike office and mynistery of goddes holy word, in their admission made a solempne professyon before the congregation that they shoulde teach the people nothinge as doctrine necessarie to attaine eternal saluation, but that which is goddes owne holy woorde or may be thereof grounded without any doubt: wherby vanished and melted away of thē selues many vaine yea wicked traditions of man, as ware before the fyer: but nowe at one brunte they are reuiued and are in ful hope all to returne againe in as great strength as euer they haue bene. And howe can

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any man looke for any other thyng, but whē you haue receiued the head, you muste also receiue the whole body withal, other elles how can the head abyde: The head vnder Satan of al mischiefe is Antichrist & his broode, and the same is he which is the babylonical beast. The beast is he whervppon the whore sytteth, the whore is that Citie saithe John in playne wordes, which hath the empire ouer the kinges of the earth. This whore hath a golden cuppe of abhominations in her hand, wherof she maketh to drinke the kinges of the earthe, & of the wine of this harlot hath al nations dronke, yea and kynges of the earth haue lyen by this whoore, and marchauntes of the earthe by vertue of her pleasaunte marchandise haue ben made ryche.

Apoc. 17.

Nowe what citie is there in al the whole world that whē John wrote, ruled ouer the kynges of the earthe: or what Citie can be redde of in any tyme, that of the citie it selfe, chaleged the empire ouer the kings of the

earth

earth, but onely the citte of Rome, & that sence the vsurpation of that see hath growen to her full strenghe: And is it not red that old and auncient writers vnderstande Peters former Epistle to be written at Rome, and it to be called of him in the same Epistle, in plaine termes, Babylō: by the abhominations thereof I vnderstande all the whole trade of the Romishe relygion vnder the name & titte of Christe, which is contrary to the only rule of al true religion, that is goddes worde. What woorde of god hath that dyuelishe drab for the mayntenaunce of her manyfolde abhominations, and to set to sel souche marchaundise wherewith (alas the madnes of man) the wycked harlott hath bewitched almoofte the whole worlde: Dyd not Peter the true Apostell of Christe, of whom this stinking strumpette beareth her selfe so high(but falsely and without al iust cause) dyd not he I say, geue all the worlde warnynge of her pelfe and trashe, of her false doctours and apo-

ities

ſtles (for this whoore and beaſt wyll be called Dominus Apoſtolicus, who ſo euer ſay nay) after this maner in his later epiſtle: There was among the people in tymes paſt falſe prophetes as there ſhall be alſo amonge you in time to come falſe teachers, whiche ſhall priuily bringe in peſtylent ſectes, euen denyinge the lorde whiche hath bought them and redemed thē, procuring to them ſelus ſwift dampnation, and many ſhall followe their dampnable waies, by whō the waye of trueth ſhall be rayled vppon, and throughe couetouſnes by counterfaite tales or ſermons they ſhal (ſaith Peter) make marchandiſe vpon you. &c. And dothe not John likewiſe in his reuelation, after he hath reconed vp a greate rablemente of this whoores myſtical marchandiſe, at the laſte (as though he wold knit vp al in playne wordes, wythout any myſt at al, ſettyng out the whoores marchandyſe) recken vp amonge the reſt, & concludeth ſayinge, Et animas hominū, ỹ is to ſay, & the ſoules of men too? Wher,

vppon

vpon I pray you elles rose this true prouerbe in latin, Omnia Rome venalia, al things for money are set to sale at Rome? Was not that a worthy cõmendation of Christes vicar in earth that was written of our holy father, one of the Alexanders a byshoppe of Rome, thus I wene, in latine?

Vendit Alexander cruces: altaria Christum,
Vendere iuri potest emerat ille prius.

These twoo verses in laten, I haue red thus of one translated into englishe rime.

Alexander our holy father the pope of Rome
selleth for money bothe ryght and doune
And al kind of holines ỹ holy father doth not
to set to sel, redy money for to get. (stick
And eke Christ him selfe he dare be bolde,
to chop and chaunge for siluer and golde.
And why should any thinke this to be sore,
for what doth he sell but ỹ he bought before?

I graunte these verses to be lyght gere, and the verse is but rude, but alas such conditions were more wicked and leude then any wytte coulde expresse. If these had ben but the faltes of one or a fewe in number, they

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had ben lesse pernicious, and might haue ben taken for personal crimes, not to be imputed vnto that see, but now alas the matter is more the euident to al that hath godly vnderstãding, that these crimes be grounded vpon lawes, be stablished by costom, and set forthe by all kinde of wycked doctrine, falshed, & craft, and therefore are not now to be esteemed for any one mannes or of a fewe mennes personal crimes, but are now by lawes, costome, and doctrine incorporated into that wicked see, & maketh in dede the body of the beast wherupõ the abhominable whore doth sit.

But you wolde knowe whiche be those marchandise which I said this whoore setteth forthe to sell, for the which al her false prophetes with al theyr iuggelyngs & crafty glosses can not bryng one iote of goddes worde. Surely surely, they be not onely all these abhominatiõs which are come into the churche of England alredy, wherof I haue spoken somwhat before, but also an innumerable rable-

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ment of abhominatious and wicked abuſes which now muſt nedes folow As popiſhe pardons, pilgrymages, Romiſhe purgatory, Romiſhe maſſes, Placebo & dirige, with trentalles & Scala cœli, diſpenſations & immunities from all godly diſcipline, lawes and good order, pluralities, vnions, and tot quottes, with a thouſande moo. Nowe ſhall come in the flatterynge fryers, and the falſe pardoners and play their olde prancke and knauery as they were wonte to do. Nowe you ſhall haue (but of the ſee of rome onely, and that for money) canonyſing of ſuche ſayntes as hath ſtoode ſtoute in the popes cauſe, ſhrinynge of relicques and from anye kynde of wickednes (if you wyll pay well for it) cleere abſolution, a pena et culpa, w̄ thouſandes of yeres, yea at euerye poore byſhops hande and ſuffragan ye ſhall haue halowing of churches, chapelles, altares, ſuperalteres, chaleces, and of al the whole houſehold ſtuffe and adornament, which ſhall be vſed in the churche after the Ro-

mishe guise, for al these things must be estemed of suche hyghe pryce that they may not be done but by a consecrate byshop only. O Lorde, all these thinges are suche as thy apostles neuer knewe. As for coniuringe (they call it halowing, but it is coniuryng in dede) of water and salt, of chrysteninge of belles and suche like lyghte thinges, what nede I to speake? for euery priest that can but reade, hath power (they say) not only to do ẏ but also hath suche power ouer Chrystes bodi as to make both god & man once at ẏ least euery daye of a wafer cake. After the rehersall of the saide abhominations, and remembraunce of a number of many mo, which (the lord knoweth) yrketh me to thinke vpon, and were to long to describe: when I consider on the other side the eternal worde of god that abydeth for euer, and the vndefiled lawe of the Lorde, which turneth the soule frō all wyckednesse, and geueth wisedome vnto the innocente Babes, I meane that mylke that is without all guyle, as

Peter

Peter doth call it, that good woꝛd of god, that woꝛde of truth, which muſt be grauen within the harte, and thē is able to ſaue mennes ſoules, that wholeſome ſede, not moꝛtall but im-moꝛtal of the eternal and euerliuing God, whereby the manne is boꝛne a newe and made the chylde of God, that ſeede of God whereby the man of god ſo being boꝛne can not ſinne, as Iohn ſaythe (he meaneth ſo longe as that ſeede doth abide in him) that holy ſcrypture whych hath not bene deuyſed by the wytte of manne, but taught from heauen by the inſpyꝛa-tion of the holy ghoſt, whych is pꝛo-fitable to teach, to repꝛoue, to coꝛrect to inſtruct and geue oꝛder in al righ-teouſneſſe, that the man of god maye be whole & ſound, ready to perfoꝛme euery good wooꝛke: when (I ſaye) I conſyder thys holye and wholeſome true wooꝛde that teacheth vs truely our bounden dewty towardes oure loꝛde god in euery poynte, what hys bleſſed wil and pleaſure is, what his infinyte greate goodneſſe and mercy

is, what he hath done for vs, how he hath geuen his owne only dere beloued to death for our saluation, & by him hath sent vs the reuelatiõ of his blessed will & pleasure, what his eternal word willeth vs both to beleue & also to do, and hath for the same purpose inspyred the holy apostles wyth the holy ghost, and sent them abrode into all the worlde, and also made them and other dysciples of Chryste, inspyred by the same spyrit, to wryte and leaue behynde theym the same thynges that they taught, which as they dyd procede of ỹ spyrit of truth, so by the confessyon of all them that euer were endued wyth the spirite of God, were sufficiente to the obteyning of eternal saluation: and lykewyse when I consyder that all that man doth professe in his regeneratiõ when he is receued into the holy catholyke church of Christ, and is now to be accounted for one of the lively members of Christes owne body, all that is grounded vpon Goddes holy worde, and standeth in the profession

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of that fayth, and obedyence of those cõmaundementes which are all contayned and compryſed in Gods holy woorde: and furthermoze when I conſider whom our ſauyoure Chryſt pronounceth in his goſpel to be bleſſed, and to whõ Moyſes geueth hys benedictions in the law, what waies the Lawe, the Prophetes, the Pſalmes, and all holy Scryptures bothe newe and olde doth declare to be the wayes of the Lord, what is good for man to obtayne and abyde in Gods fauour, which is that fayth that iuſtifieth before God, and what is that charity that doeth paſſe and excel al, which be the properties of heauenly wiſedome, and whyche is that vndefiled religion that is allowed of god, whych thynges Chryſt himſelfe calleth the weighti matters of the law, what thing is that which is only auayable in Chryſt, and what knowledge is that that Paule eſtemed ſo much that he counted him ſelfe only to knowe, what ſhall be the maner of the extream iudgemẽt of the later

day, who shal iudge, and by what he shal iudge, and what shall be requyred at our hands at that fearful day, howe all thynges muste be tryed by the fier, and that that only shal stand for euer whych Christes wordes shal allowe, which shal be the iudge of al flesh to geue sentence vpon al flesh, and euery liuynge soule, eyther of eternall damnation or of euerlastyng saluation, from whyche sentence there shall be no place to appeale, no wytte shall serue to delude, nor no power to wythstande or reuoke: when (I saye) I consyder all these thynges and conferre the same agayne and agayne, all those wayes wherin standeth the substance of the Romishe relygion, (whereof I spake before) it may be euydente and easye to perceaue, that these two wayes, these two relygions, the one of christ the other of the Romishe see in these latter dayes, be as farre dystaunte the one from the other as lighte and darkenesse, good and euyll, rygh-teousnes and vnrighteousnes, christ

and

¶ Belial. Ye that is harde of beliefe, let him note and way well with him selfe the places of holye Scrypture which be appointed in the margent, whereupon this talke is grounded, and by Gods grace he maye receyue some lyght. And vnto the contemner I haue nothynge nowe to saye, but to rehearse the saying of the prophet Esaye, whyche Paule spake to the Iewes in the ende of the actes of the apostles. After he had expounded vnto them the truth of Gods worde, and declared vnto them Christe out of the lawe of Moyses and the Prophetes from mornynge to nyghte all the day long, he said vnto them that woulde not beleue, well (sayde he) spake the holi ghost vnto our fathers sayinge, go vnto this people and tel them ye shall heare with your eares and not vnderstande, and seinge you shall beholde, and not se the thynge, for the harte of this people is wared grosse or dull, and wyth theyr eares they are harde of hearynge, and they haue shutte together theyr eyes that

they ſhoulde not ſee, noꝛ heare wyth theyꝛ eares, noꝛ vnderſtande wyth their harts, that they might return, and I ſhoulde heale theym, ſayth the loꝛde God. Alas Englande alas that thys heauy plague of god ſhould fall vpon thee, alas my dere beloued coũtrey, what thing is it now that may do the good? Undoutedly thy plague is ſo great that it is vtterly vncurable, but by the bottomles mercy and infinite power of almightye Godde. Alas my deare countrey what haſte thou done that thus thou haſt pꝛouoked the wꝛathe of God to pource oute hys vengeaunce vpon thee foꝛ thyne owne deſerts? Canſt thou be contẽt to heare thy faultes tolde thee? Alas thou haſte heard ofte, and wouldeſt neuer amende. Englande, thy faults of all degrees and ſoꝛtes of men, of the mageſtrates, of the mynyſters, & of the common people, were neuer moꝛe plainly tolde, ſence thou bareſt that name, then thou didſte heare theym of late euen befoꝛe the mageſtrates in kynge Edwardes dayes,

but

but thou hardeſt them only and didſt amend neuer a whit. For euen of thy greateſt mageſtrats; ſome (the kings byghneſſe then, that innocente, that godly harted, & peereles pong chriſtian prince excepted) euermore vnkindly & vngētly againſt thoſe that went aboute moſt buſely & moſt holeſomly to cure their ſore backs, ſpurned priuely, and woulde not ſpare to ſpeake euyl of them euē vnto the prince him ſelfe, & yet would they towardes the ſame preacher outwardelye beare a ioly countenaunce and a fayre face. I haue hearde that Cranmer and an other whom I wyll not name, were both in high diſpleaſure, the one for ſhewinge his conſcience ſecretly but plainly and fully in the duke of Somerſets cauſe, and bothe of late, but ſpecially Cranmer for repugning as they might againſt the late ſpoile of the church goodes, taken away only by cōmaundement of the byghest powers wythoute any lawe or order of iuſtice, and withoute any requeſte of conſente of them to whome they dyd belonge.

The meaneth hym ſelfe.

belonge. As for Latymer, Lever, Bradford, and Knox, theyr tonges were so sharp, they rypped in so depe in theyr galled backes, to haue purged thē, no dout, of the filthy matter that was festered in theyr hartes, of insaciable couetousnes, of filthy carnality and voluptuousnesse, of intolerable ambitiō and pride, of vngodly lothsomnes to heare poore mennes causes, and to heare gods word, that these men of all other, these magestrates thē could neuer abide. Other there were very godly men & wel lerned ẏ went about by the wholesome plaisters of gods word, how be it after a more soft maner of handling of the matter, but alas all sped in lyke. For all that could be done of al bandes, their disease dydde not minishe, but dayly didde encrease, whyche no doubt is no smal occasiō in ẏ state, of the heauy plague of god that is poured vpō England at this day. As for the cōmon sort of other inferior magestrates, as iudges of the lawe: iustices of peace, sergeantes, common

lawyers

lawyers, it may be truly sayde of thē as of the most parte of the Clergy, of curates, vicars, persons, prebendaryes, doctors of the law, archdeacōs, deanes, yea, & I may saye of bishops also I feare me, for the more part (although I dout not but god had and hathe euer whome he in euery state knew and knoweth to be his) but for the most part I say, they were neuer perswaded in their hartes but from the tethe forward, and for the kings sake in the truth of gods worde, and yet all these dyd dissemble and bare a copye of a countenaunce as if they had bene sound within.

And thys dyssimulation Sathan knewe wel enough, and therfore desyred and hath euer gone about that the hygh magestrates by any maner of meanes might be deceued in matters of relygion, for then he beinge of counsell with the dissimulation in the worldly, knewe wel enough that he should bryng to passe and rule all euen after his owne wyll.

Hypocrisy and dissimulation S.

Hierome

Hierome doth cal well a double wickednes, for neither it loueth ẏ truth, (whiche is one greate euill) and also falsely it pretendeth to deceyue the simple for an other thing. This hipocrisy and dissimulation with God in matters of religion, no doubte, hath wholy also prouoked ẏ anger of god. And as for the common people, although there were many good whet they were wel and diligẽtly taught, yet god knoweth a great number receaued Gods true worde and byghe benefites wyth vnthankful heartes. For it was greate pitie & a lamentable thinge to haue sene in many places the people so lothsomly & so vnreligiously to come to the holy cõmunion & to receaue it accordingly, and to the cõmon prayers and other diuine seruice, which were according to the true veyne of gods holy worde, in al poyntes so godly and holesomely set forthe, in comparison of that blynde zeale and vndiscrete deuotion which they had afore times to those things whereof they vnderstode neuer one

whyt noꝛ could be edifyed by thē any thing at all. And again as foꝛ almes dedes which ar taught in gods woꝛd (wherby we are certayne that god is pleased with them, and doth and wil require such at our hands, which are a parte of true religion as S. James sayth, and suche as he sayth himselfe he setteth moꝛe by then by sacrifice, as to pꝛouyde foꝛ the fatherlesse infants and oꝛphanes, foꝛ the lame, aged, and impotent pooꝛe nedy folke, and to make publyke pꝛouision that the pouertye that myghte laboure, should haue wherwith to labour vpon, and so be kepte from shamefull beggery and stealing) in these woꝛks I say, how wayward were many, in comparison (I meane) of that greate pꝛodigalitie, whereby in times passe they spared not to spende vpon flatteryng fryers, false pardoners, painting and gilding of stockes & stones, to be set vp and honoꝛed in churches plainly against gods woꝛde. And yet bicause no place is to be defrauded of their iust commendacion, London I

must

must confesse that such godly works in sir Dobs knight then lord Maior his yere, began marueilous wel, the Lorde graunt the same maye so likewise perseuer, continue, yea and encrease to the comforte & relefe of the nedy and helpelesse, that was so godli begon. Amen.

All these thynges doe mynyster matter of more mournynge and bewaling the miserable state that now is, for by this it maye be perceayued howe well Englande hath deserued this iust plague of God.

And also it is greatly to be feared, that those good thynges whatsoeuer they were that had their beginnynge in the time when Goddes word was freely preached, nowe with the eryle and banishmēt of the same, they will departe agayne.

But to returne agayne to the consideration of thys myserable state of Christes church in Englande, and to leaue farder and more exquisite searching of the causes therof vnto gods secret and vnserchable iudgements,

let

lette vs see what is beste nowe to be done for Christes lyttle selye flocke. This is one Maxime and principle in Christes law: he that denieth me before men, him shall Christ deny afore his father and al his aungels of heauen. And therfore euery one that loketh to haue by Christ our sauiour euerlasting life, let him prepare him selfe so, that he denye not his master Christ, or els he is but a caste away and a wretch, howesoeuer he be cõted or taken here in the worlde.

Nowe then seinge the doctrine of antechriste is retourned agayne into this realme, and the higher powers (alas) are so deceaued and bewitched y they are perswaded it to be truth, and Christes true doctrin to be error and heresie, and the old lawes of antechrist are allowed to returne wyth the power of their Father agayne, what can be hereafter loked for by reason to the man of God and trewe christian abiding in this realme, but extreame violence of deathe or els to denye his master. I graunt the harte

of

of prynces are in Gods handes, and whether soeuer he will he can make them to bowe, and also that christiã princes in old time vsed a more gentell kinde of punishment, euen to thẽ which were heritikes in dede, as degradation and depositiõ out of theyr rowmes and offices, exile and banishmente out of their dominions & coũtreyes, and also (as it is red) the true bishops of christes church were somtimes intercessours for the heretikes vnto princes that they would not kil them, as is red of S. Augustine. But as yet Antechristes kyngedome was not so erected at that time, nor is now accustomed to order theym that wyll not fal downe and worship the beast and hys image, but (euen as all the worlde knoweth) after the same maner that both John and Daniel hath prophesied before, that is by violence of death, and Daniell declareth farder the kynde of death accustomably should be by sworde, fier, and imprysonment. Therefore if thou O man of God, doe purpose to abide in thys

realme

realme, prepare and arme thy self to die, for bothe by antechristes accustomable lawes, and these prophecies, ther is no apparance or likelyhode of any other thinge, excepte thou wylte deny thy master Christ, which is the losse at the laste both of body & soule vnto euerlastinge death. Therefore my good brother or syster in Christe whatsoeuer thou be, to thee that cãst and mayest so do, that counsel that I thinke is the best sauegarde for thee, both for thy bodi, and most suerty for thy soules helth, is that which I shal shew thee herafter. But first I warn thee to vnderstande me to speake to him or her which be not in captiuitry or called already for to confesse christ, but is at liberty abrode. My counsell I say therfore is this, to flie from the plague and to get thee hense. I consider not only the subtelties of sathã, and howe he is able to deceiue by his false perswasions, if it were possible, euen the chosen of God, and also the greate frailty whiche is often tymes more in a man then he doth know in

himselfe, which in the time of temptation then will utter it selfe: I doe not only consider these thyngs I say, but that our master christ whose life was and is a perfect rule of the christian mannes life, that he himselfe auoyded oftentimes the fury and madnes of the Iewes by departing from the countrye or place.

Paule like wise when he was sought in Damasco, and the gates of the citie were layde in wayte for hym, he was conueyed by night, let down in a basket oute at a windowe ouer the wall, and Helias the prophet fledde the persecution of wycked Iesabell. And Christ our Sauiour saith in the Gospell, when they persecute you in one citie flie vnto another: and so did many good greate learned and vertuous men of god, which were great & stoute champions neuertheles, and stoute confessors and mainteyners of Christ and his truth in due time and place. Of such was the greate clarke Athanasius. But this is so playne to be lawfull by gods worde & examples of

holy

holy men, that I nede not to ſtand in it. Hauing this for my groũd, I ſaye to thee O man of god this ſemeth to me to be the moſt ſure waye for thy ſauegard, to depart and flie far from the plague, & that ſwiftly alſo: for truly before god, I thinck that the abhomination that Daniel prophecied of ſo long before, is now ſet vp in ỹ holy place. For al antechriſts doctrine, lawes, rytes & religion, contrary to Chriſte and to the true ſeruynge and worſhyppyng of god, I vnderſtande to be that abhomination: therefore now is the time in Englãd for thoſe words of Chriſt: Tũc, inquit, qui in Iudæa ſunt fugiant ad montes Then, ſaith he, marke this chriſtes (then) for truly I am perſwaded and I truſt by the ſpirit of god, that this then, is cõmaunded: Then, ſaith Chryſt, they that be in Iewry let them flie into the moũtaynes, & he that is on the houſe top let him not come down to take away any thynge out of his houſe, and he that is abrode in the fielde, let hym not returne to take his clothes. Wo

be to the great bellied women and to them that geue ſucke, but pray ſaith Chriſt, that your flight be not in winter nor on the ſabboth daye . Theſe wordes of Chriſt are miſtical, & there fore haue nede of interpretatiõ. I vnderſtand all thoſe to be in Iewry ſpiritually, which truly cõfeſſe one true liuinge god, and the whole trueth of hys worde after the doctryne of the goſpel of Chriſt. Such are they whõ here chryſt biddeth in the time of the reygne of Antechryſtes abhominations to flie vnto the moũtains, which ſignifieth places of ſafegarde, and all ſuch thinges whych are able to defẽd frõ the plague. That he biddeth him that is on the houſe top not to come downe, nor him that is in the fyelde not to returne to take with him hys clothes, he meaneth that they ſhould ſpede them to get thẽ awaye betime, leaſt in their taryinge & triflinge about worldly prouiſion, thei be trapped in the ſnare, or euer they be aware and caughte by the backe, and for gayne of ſmall worldly thinges endaunger

and

and caſt them ſelues in to greate perilles of moꝛe weighty matter. And where he ſayth wo to the greate belyed women, and to theim that geue ſucke: women great with childe, and nigh to their lying dowine, and to be bꝛought to bedde are not able to trauel, noꝛ alſo thoſe women which are bꝛought to bedde, & now geueth their babes ſucke: by theſe therefoꝛe chꝛiſt ſpiritually vnderſtãdeth al ſuch to be in extreme danger (which this woꝛd wo ſignifieth) all ſuche I ſaye, as are ſoo letted by any maner of meanes, that they no wayes be able to fly frõ the plague. That which chꝛiſt ſaith, pꝛaye that your flight be not in winter noꝛ on the ſabboth day: In wynter the common courſe of the yeare teacheth vs that the wayes be foule, and therefoꝛe it is a harde thing then to take a far iourney foꝛ manye incõmodities and daungers of the wayes in that time of the yeare: and on the ſabboth daye it was not lawefull to iozney but a little way. Now Chꝛiſt therefoꝛe meaninge that we ſhoulde

haue nede both to spede our iourney quickly, whiche can not be doone in winter for the incommodities of the wayes, and also to go far, which can not be done on the Sabboth daye: he biddeth vs therefore praye that oure flight be not in winter nor on the sabboth daye, that is, to praye that we may flie in time, and also far enough frō the daunger of the plague. Now the causes why we shoulde flie, followeth in ỹ same place of S. Mathewes
Wath. 24. gospel, which I now passe ouer: thou maiest reade them there.

And in the 18. chapter of the Reuelation, the aungell is sayde to haue cryed myghtely wyth a loude voyce, flye my people out of Babylon leaste you be infected with her faultes and so be made partners of her plagues: for her offences and synnes are growen so great that they swell and are come vnto the heauen: certainly the time doth approch and the lordes day is at hande. Yeare, I beseech you, also holye Paule, that blessed apostle: he plainly forbiddeth vs ducere iugum cum

incredulis:

incredulis that is, to ioyne or couple
our selues wyth the vnfaythfull, for
what felowshyp can ther be(saith he)
of righteousnes wyth vnrighteous- 2.Cor.6.
nes, what company hath light with
darknes.or what agremēt hath christ
with Belial, or what parte can the
faithful haue with the vnfaithful, or
how doth the temple of god agree with
images or idols, for you are the temple
of the liuing god: as god hath said, I
will walke and dwell in them, I wil
be their god, and they shalbe my peo-
ple, wherfore depart from amongest
them and gette you from them, saith
the lorde, & touch no vncleane thinge
and I wyl receaue you and be to you
in the stede of your father & you shall
be vnto me as my sonnes and daugh
ters, sayth the almighty Lorde.

This counsel to depart the realme,
I doe not maruell if it do seme to dy-
uers(euen of theim I meane ỹ beare
fauoure to godwarde) dyuersly. Ma-
ny(I trust) that be lerned shal thinke
the counsel good. Other there be per
aduenture that will thynke it rather

a thing to be more tollerable andẏ it may be in dede by gods worde lawefully done, rather then to be coũsayled to be done, for they wil (peraduẽture) saye, we shoulde counsell a man alwayes to doe that which is beste of all, and of most parfectiõ, but boldly in Christes cause to spend a mannes life, is beste of all, and of most perfection, and to flie it may seme to smell of cowardnes. In many things, that which is best for one at some times, is not best for all at all times, and it is not most perfection nor meete for a child to couet to runne before he can go. I wyll not make here a discourse in thys matter what myghte here be obiected, and what might be aunswered againe: I leaue that to the witty and eloquent men of the worlde.

This is my minde whych I would thou shouldest knowe, o man of god, as I would wishe and I doe praye to almighty God it may be, that euery true christian eyther brother or syster (after they be called and broughte in to the wrestlynge place, to stryue in

Christes

Chriſtes cauſe for the beſt game, that is to confeſſe the truth of the goſpell and of the Chriſtian fayth in hope of euerlaſting lyfe) ſhoulde not ſhrynke nor relente one ynche, or gyue backe what ſoeuer ſhall befall, but ſtande to their tackle, and ſtycke by it euen vnto death, as they will Chriſt ſhall ſticke by them at the latter daye. So likewiſe I dare not wiſhe nor coũſel any, either brother or ſiſter of their owne ſwinge to ſtart vp into ỹ ſtage, or to caſt themſelues eyther before or farder in danger then tyme and nede ſhall requyre: for vndoubtedly when God ſeeth his time, and his pleaſure is that his glory ſhalbe ſet forth, and his church edefyed by thy deathe and confeſſion, meanes ſhal be founde by hys fatherly vniuerſall prouydence, that thou wythoute thine owne preſumptuouſe prouocatiõ, ſhalt be lawfully called to do thy feate & to playe thy parte. The miſerable ende that one Quiotas came vnto, may be a warninge and a fearefull example for all men to beware of preſumption and

Lib. 4. Cap. 15.

raſhnes in ſuche thinges (as Euſebius writeth in Eccleſiaſtica hiſtoria) for euermore.

But a thirde ſorte of men there be which alſo wil be counted fauourers of gods word: are, I feare, in nũber farre mo and worſe to be perſwaded to that which is the godly meane. I meane of ſuch as will peraduenture ſaye or thynke that my former counſel which was, to flie the infection of the antechriſtian doctrine by departure oute of the realme, is more then nedeth, and other wayes and meanes may be found both to abide and alſo to be cleare out of danger of the foreſaide plague. If that could be founde in dede truly agreable to gods word I woulde be as glad to heare it (god is my witneſſe) as who is the other.

Yes peraduenture will ſome saye, thus it may be. Thou maiſt kepe thy ſelfe, thy fayth, and thy religiõ cloſe to thy ſelf, and inwardly and priuately worſhip god in ſpirit & in truthe, and outwardlye ſee thou be no open medler, nor talker, nor tranſgreſſour

of

of common order: so mayeste thou be suffred in the common wealth, & yet vse thy relygion without offence of thy conscience. In other countreies somwhere this peraduenture might be vsed, but in Englande what shall be, god wot, but it was neuer yet, so far as euer I haue known or heard. And also howe can it be, but eyther thou must transgresse the cõmon order and the Romyshe lawes and customes whych haue ben vsed in England in the times past of popery, and nowe (it is certayne) they returne agayne: I say, thou muste eyther be a breaker of these rites, lawes, and costomes, and so bewray thy selfe, or els if thou be in dede a man of God, thou shalt offende thy conscience, for in obseruinge of them thou shalte be compelled to breake gods law which is the rule of cõscyence to the man of god. For how canst thou resort euery holye day to the church and beare a face to worshyp the creature for the creatour (as thou must do) and peraduenture cõfesse it to with thy mouth

an

and to sprynckle thy selfe with theyr conjured water? Thou must be cõtributor also to ẏ charges of al their popery, as of bokes for antechristes seruice, of lyghtes of the roode lofte, of the sepulchre, for setting vp and paintyng of images (nay in dede of idols) and thou muste beare a face to worshyp theym also, or els thou muste be had by the back. Thou must serue the turne to geue the holy loues, as they call it, whiche is nothynge els but a very mockery of the lords holy table. Thou must be a cõtributor to ẏ charges of al ẏ disgised apparel ẏ the popish sacrificing priest, like vnto Aarõ, must play his part in. Yea when the pardoner commeth about, or the flatteringe frier to begge for the maynteanunce of superstition, except thou doe as thy neighboures doe, loke not longe for to liue in rest. If any of thy housholde dye, if thou wilte not paye money for ringinge and singing, for requiem masses, dirige, & commendations, and suche like trumpery of the antechristian religion, thinkest thou that

thou

thou ſhalt be reckned for a catholyke man or for Amicus Cæſaris? A hundred thynges mo may be reckned, & many of more weyght and of more euident ſuperſtitiõ and Idolatrie, then ſome of theſe which I haue now reherſed, whiche god knoweth be ill enough: but theſe are enough to declare and to ſet before thine eies the thing that I intende, that is if thou abyde and wylt dwell in Englande, thou muſt eyther do theſe and manye other mo contrarye to gods worde, whiche forbiddeth not onely the thynge whyche is euyll, but alſo ſayth, Ab omni ſpecie mali abſtinete vos, abſteine frõ al things that hathe any apparance of euyll: or els if thou wilte not doe theim, howe thou canſt lyue in Englande in reſte and ſafe from the ſtake, trulye I can not tel. But peraduenture (as a man is redy to finde and inuente ſome coloure to clooke his conſcyence, to doe that thynge that hys harte deſyreth) thou wilte ſay, thoughe at any tyme I ſhall be forced to doe anye of theſe thyngs and ſuch lyke, yet wil I haue

no con-

no confidence in them, but outwardly with my body: I wil kepe my hart vnto god, & wil not doe that of mine owne mynde wyllingly neyther, but to auoyde an other inconuenyence: I trust therfore God wyl holde me excused, for he shal haue my hart, what can I doe more? O mi friend beware for gods sake, and know that the subtelties of Satan are depe. He that is not able by gods worde to perceiue them, is heauely laden, pray therfore with Dauid: Lord let me not haue a minde to inuente excuses for to cloke my synne. Examine my deare frend, these thy wily wates wyth the word of god, and if thei do agre, thou maiest vse them, if not, knowe, thoughe they may seme neuer so fine & goodlye, yet in deede they be of Satyans broode. Goddes worde it is certaine, that forbyddeth to worshyp the creature for the creatour, for that is heynous idolatry, and agaynst the fyrste cõmaundement of god, and it is also against the second cõmaundement of the firste table, to bowe downe, or to

do worshyp vnto any images of god or of any other thing, and gods word requireth not onely the beliefe of the harte, but also the confession of the mouth: and to beare parte of the charges to the mayntenaunce of thynges vngodlye, what is that but in thy soinge a consent to the thinge done? Now consenters and the doers gods worde accounteth to be giltye bothe. And it is not lawefull by S. Paules doctrine whych was inspired hym by the spirite of god, to do il that therof the thyng which is good may come. Thy hart, thou saiest, god shal haue, and yet wilte thou suffer thy body to do the thing that god doeth abhorre. Beware O mã, take hede what thou saiest. Man may be deceaued, but no man may deceaue God, for he is called and is trewly καρδιογνωστης that is to saye, the searcher of the harte. Now to geue god thy hart is to geue him thy whole harte, to loue him, to dread him, and to trust in hym aboue al other things. He that hath my cõmaũdement sayth Christ, and obser-

ueth

ueth and kepeth them, it is he that lo ueth me, and to dreade god aboue all other, is rather willingly to incurre the danger and perill of all fearefull thinges, then wyttingly to doe that thynge which is contrary to his blessed will and commaundemente: and to truste in him aboue all thinges, is assuredly to truste to hys promyse of his reward, and of hys tuition and of his goodnesse and mercy, and to prefer that aboue al thinges in ỹ world, seme they neuer so strong, so wyse, or so good. Now howe canste thou saye truly, that God hathe thy harte after this maner of sorte (which is to haue thy harte in dede) when thy dedes do declare far an other thinge: Thy body, o man, is gods, and al the partes thereof euen as thy soule is: he made them both and Christ with his bloud hath redemed them both, and is lorde of both, for he hath boughte thē both deare, & dareste thou suffer any parte of eyther of them to do seruice to Satan: Surely in so doinge, thou committest sacrilege and doest rob God,

thou

thou defileſt the liuely temple of the liuing god if thou ſuffer thy body to do ſathan ſeruice. Do you not know ſaith S. Paule, that your body is a liuely temple of god: and may a man then take and vſe anye parte thereof but in the ſeruice of God: No ſurely it is not lawful ſo to doe ſo ỹ man of god, neither with hand, tongue, nor foote, nor any part of the whole body.

Doth not Paule commaund to the Romaines, which pertaineth to euery Chriſtian ſoule: As you haue in times paſt, ſaith he) geuen your members to doe ſeruice vnto vncleaneſſe and wickednes, from one wickednes to another, ſo nowe geue your members to do ſeruice vnto righteouſnes that you may be ſanctified. And I prai thee good brother, what doeſt thou thinke is, to beare the marcke of the beaſte in the forehead and in the hand that S. John ſpeaketh of: I know we ought warely to ſpeake of gods miſteries which he ſhewed by the ſpirit of prophecying to his ſeruant John, yet to reade theym wyth reuerence,

and to praye for the vnderstandynge of the same so much as god knoweth is necessary for our time to knowe, I thinke it necessary and good. Wherfore what I suppose is to beare the beastes marke, I wyll tell thee, and commit the iudgement of mine interpretation, as in all other thinges, to the spirituall man. I suppose he beareth the beast of Babilons marke in his forhead, which is not ashamed of the beastes waies, but wyll professe them openly to set forthe hys master
Apo. 9. the beaste Abaddon. And likewyse he beareth his marke in his hands that wil and doeth practise the workes of the beaste with his power and hand. And likewyse I will not lette to tell thee, what I thincke to be sygned in the forhead for the seruants of God, whereof Iohn also speaketh, reckening vp many thousandes so to haue bene sygned of euery tribe. I suppose he is signed in the forhead for the seruant of god, whom god hath appointed of his infinite goodnes, and hath geuen him grace and strength, stoutly to

ly to confesse him and his trueth be-
fore the worlde. And to haue grace &
strength to confesse christ and the doc-
trine of the crosse, and to lament and
mourne for the abhominatiõs of an-
techryste, I suppose is to be sygned
wyth Tau whereof Ezechiell the pro-
phet doeth speake. Thus I suppose
these prophecies are spiritually to be
vnderstanded, and to looke for other
corporall markes to be sene in mens
forheads or in their handes, is no-
thing els but to loke that ther should
come some brute beaste out of Babi-
lon, or some Elephante, Leoparde,
Lion, or Camell or some other suche
mõstrous beast with ten hornes, that
shoulde do all the wonderful thyngs
spoken in John: & yet of a beast spea-
keth John, but I vnderstande him so
to be called not for that he shalbe ani
such brute beaste, but for that he is &
shalbe the childe of perdicion, whych
for his cruelty and beastly maners is
well called a beaste.

The carnal Iewes knewe ther was
a promise made that Helias shoulde

come before christ Messias the anoin
ted of god, to prepare his waies: thei
knewe also there was a promyse of
Messias, that he shoulde come and be
a kinge & raigne in the house of Da-
uid for euermore, but thei vnderstode
all so grosely & so carnally, that they
neyther knewe Helias nor Messias
whē they came, for they loked for He
lias to come downe from heauen in
his own persō, & for Messias to come
& raygne in worldly pompe, power,
riches & glorye, when as the prophe-
cies of both were spiritually to haue
bene vnderstanded: of Helias that he
should come not in person but in spi-
rit, that is, one which should be indu
ed with the spirit and giftes of grace
of Helias, which was in deede John
Baptist, as christ himself dyd declare
to his apostles: & of Messias raygne,
all the prophets were to be vnderstā
ded of ỹ raigne of his spiritual king-
dome ouer the house of Jacob, & the
true Israelites for euermore. And so
by that theyr grosse and carnall vn-
derstandinge they mystake both He-

lias

lias and the true Messias, and when they came, knewe neyther of theym both. So likewise I feare me (nay it is certain) ỹ world that wanteth the light of the spirit of god, (for ỹ world is not able to receaue hym, sayeth John) neyther doth, nor shall knowe the beast nor his markes, though he rage cruelly & liue neuer so beastly, & thoughe his marked men be in number like the sand of the sea. The lord therfore vouchsafe to open the eies of the blinde wyth the lyghte of grace, that thei may see & perceaue, and vnderstand the wordes of god after the minde of his spirite. Amen.

Here remayneth two obiections which maye seeme weyghty, and the which may peraduẽture moue many not to folow the former coũsell. The former reason is: a man will saye, Oh sir it is no smal matter ye speake of, to depart from a mans owne natiue coũtrey into a straunge realme. Many men haue so greate lettes, as howe is it possible ỹ they can or may do so? Some haue lands and possessi-

ons whych they can not carry wyth thē, some haue father, mother, wyfe, children, and kinsefolke, from whom to depart is as hard a thyng (and all one almost) as to suffer death, and to goe to a straunge countrey that thou knowest not, neyther the maner of the people nor how thou maist away either with ẏ people or w̄ the cūtrey. Oh what a harde thinge it is to liue among a straunge people whose tongue thou doest not vnderstande. &c.

I graunt here thou mayest heape a number of worldly incommodityes whych are surely verye lyke to ensue the departure out of a mannes owne native countrey, I meane out of the whole realme into a straunge lande: but what of all these and a thousand mo of the like sorte? I wil set vnto thē one sayinge of our Sauioure Christe which vnto the faithful childe of god and to the true Christyan, is able to counteruaile al these, yea and to way thē downe. Christ our sauiour saithe in Luke: if any come to me and doe not hate his father & mother (he mea

neth

neth and wil not in his cause forsake his father and mother) his wife, children, and brethren, yea and hys lyfe to, he cannot be my disciple: and who soeuer doeth not beare hys crosse and come after me he cannot be my discyple. And in ỹ same place he declareth by two parables, one of a buylder, & the other of a king that is a warrier, that euery man that wyl not in christes cause forsake all ỹ euer he hath, he can not be hys dyscyple. Loke the place who wil, the matter is so plainly sette forthe, that no gloses nor clokyng of conscience to the man of god, can serue to the contrary. Many places there be for the same purpose, for the imbracing of christes crosse, whē Christ and hys cause layeth it vppon our backe, but thys is so playne that I nede here to rehearse no more.

The latter reason & obiection whereof I spake before is of more force, and includeth a necessitie which after the common sayinge hathe no labe, and therfore it is more harde to shape for it a good aunswere.

This may be obiected of some. Alas sir I graūt all these thinges do greue me, and because I vnderstande they do not agre with gods worde whych is the rule of my conscīēce, I loth either to loke on them or to heare thē. But sir, alas, I am an impotēt man, an aged man, a sycke manne, a lame man, or I haue so many smal infants and a lame wife, which all lyueth by my labour and by my prouision, if I leaue them, they shall sterue, & I am not able to cary them with me, suche is my state. Alas sir what shall I do? And these causes may chaūce to some men of god, whereby either it shalbe for them vtterly impossible to depart the coūtrey, or els in departing, they shal be inforced to forsake such in extreame necessities of whom both god and nature hath commytted vnto thē the care. Alas what counsell is here to be geuen? O lamentable state, O sorowefull harte that neither can departe, and without extreame danger and peryll is not able to tarye styll. And these are they whom our sauior

Christ

Chriſt ſawe before ſhould be, and cal-
led them in his prophecy of the latter
time, great beilied or trauelinge wo-
men, and women that geueth after
they be broughte to bed, their ſmall
babes ſucke. The ſtate of ſuch as are
not able to fly the infection of the pe-
ſtiferous plague of antechriſts abho-
minations, Chryſt lamentinge & not
curſing, ſayth: wo be vnto the greate
bellyed and trauelynge women, and
women ẏ geueth ſuck in thoſe daies.
For theſe alas my hart mourneth the
more, the leſſe I am able to geue any
comfortable counſayle but this, that
alwaies, as they loke for everlaſting
life, they abide ſtii in the cõfeſſion of
his truth whatſoeuer ſhal befall, and
for the reſt to putte their truſt nowe
wholy in God, whych is able to ſaue
them againſt all apparaunce: & com-
monly in extremities, whē al worldly
comforte fayleth and the danger is
at higheſt, then vnto his he is wonte
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Daniell God ſuffered to be caſte into

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the denne of lions, and the thre chyldren into the hotte burning fornace, and yet he saued thē all. Paule was plucked out of the mouth of the lion, as he saieth of himself, and in Asia he was brought in such trouble ỹ he loked for no other thing but for present death, & yet he that rayseth the deade to lyfe againe did bringe him out of all his troubles, and taught him and all other that be in troubles for christes cause not to trust to thēselues but in almighty God. Of gods gracious aid in extreme perils towards them ỹ put their trust in him, all scripture is ful both olde & newe. What daūgers were the patriarks often brought vn to, as Abrahā, Isaac and Jacob, but of all other Joseph, & how mercifully were thei deliuered againe: In what perylles was Moyses when he was faine to flie for ỹ safegard of his life: & whē was he sent againe to deliuer the Israelytes from the seruyle bondage: not before they were brought into extreame misery. And when dyd the lord mightely deliuer his people

from

from Pharao his sworde: not before they were brought in such straytes ẏ they were so compassed on euery side (the mayne sea on the one syde, & the mayne hoste on ẏ other) ẏ they could looke for none other, yea what didde they els in dede loke for then, but eyther to haue bene drowned in ẏ sea, or els to haue fallē on ẏ edge of Pharao his sword. These iudges, which wrought most wonderful thynges in the deliuery of the people, were euer geuen when the people was brought to most miserye before: as Othoniel, Aioth, Sangar, Gedeon, Iephthe, Samson, And so was Saul indued with strength and boldnes from aboue, against the Ammonites, Philistines, & Amalechites for the defence of the people of God. Dauid likewyse felt gods helpe most sensibly euer in his extreme persecutions. What shall I speake of the prophetes of god whom god suffered so oft to be brought into extreme perils and so mightely deliuered theim againe? As Helias, Hieremy, Daniel, Micheas, and Ionas, and manye other whom

it were

it were but to longe to rehearse, and set out at large. And did the lorde vse his seruantes otherwise in the newe law after christes incarnation? Read the actes of the apostels and you shal see no. Were not thapostels cast into prison and brought out by the mighty hande of god? Did not the aungell deliuer Peter out of ỹ stronge prison & brynge hym outs by the yron gates of the citie and set him free? And whē I praye you? euen the same night before Herod apointed to haue brought him in iudgement for to haue slayne hym, as he had a lyttle before kylled James the brother of John. Paule and Silas, when after they had bene sore scourged and were put into the inner prison and there were layd fast in the stockes, I praye you what apparāce was ther that the magestrats should be glad to come the nert daye themselues to thē, to deliuer theym to be contente and to departe in peace? who prouyded for Paule, ỹ he should be safely conducted oute of all danger and brought to Felix ỹ Emperours

deputy?

deputy: whē as both the high prestes the Pharisyes and rulers of ỹ Jewes had conspired to requier iudgemente of death against him, he being fast in prison, and also more thē fourty men hadde sworne eche one to other that they would neuer eate nor drinke vntill they had slaine Paule. A thynge wōderful, that no reason could haue inuented, or man could haue looked for, god prouided Paule his owne sisters sonne a younge man, that disaponited that conspiracy and all their former conjuratiō. The maner how the thinge cam to passe, thou maiest reade in the .23. of the actes. I will not be tedyous vnto thee here wyth the rehersall therof.

Nowe to descende from the apostles to the martyrs that folowed next in christes church, & in them likewise to declare howe gracious our good god euer hath bene to work wonderfully wō them, which in his cause haue ben in extreme perilles, it were a matter enough to write a longe boke. I will here name but one man and one wo-

man

man that is Athanasius the great clerke & godly man stoutly standing in chri-stes cause against the Arrians, & that holy woman Blandina, standing so constantly in all extreme paynes, in the simple cõfession of christ. If thou wilt haue examples of mo, loke and thou shalt haue both these & a hundred mo in Ecclesiastica historia of Eusebius, & in Tripartita historia.

But for all these examples both of holy scripture and of other histories, I feare mee the weake man of God incombred with the frailty and infirmity of the flesshe, wil haue now and then suche thoughtes vnd quawmes (as they cal thē) to run ouer his hart, and to thynke thus: all theis thinges which are rehersed oute of the scripture, I beleue to be true, & of the rest truly I do thinke wel, and can beleue them also to be true, but all these we must nedes graūt were special miracles of god, whych now in our dayes ars ceased we se, & to require them at gods handes, were it not to tēpt god: Well beloued brother, I graūt such

were

were great wonderful wo2ks of god, and we haue not sene many of suche miracles in our time, eyther for that our sight is not cleare (fo2 truly God wo2keth w̄ his, his part in all times) o2els bicause we haue not ỹ like faith of thē fo2 whose cause God wrought such thinges: o2 bicause after that he had set fo2th the truth of his doctrine by suche miracles then sufficientlye, the tyme of so manye myracles to be done was expired withall. Which of theis is the moste speciall cause of all others, o2 whether there be anye o-there, God knoweth: I leaue that to God. But knowe thou this my wel-beloued in God, that Gods hande is as strong as euer it was, he maye do what his gracyous plesure is, and he is as good and gracious as euer he was. Man chaūgeth as the garment doth, but god our heauenly father is euen the same now that he was, and shalbe fo2 euermo2e.

The wo2ld without doubt (this I do beleue, & therfo2e I saye) d2aweth towardes an end, and in al ages god

hath

hath had his owne maner, after hys secrete and vnsearchable wisdome to vse his elect, somtimes to deliuer thē and to kepe them safe, and somtimes to suffer theym to drinke of Christes cup, that is to fele the smarte, and to fele of the whyp.

And though the flesche smarteth at the one, and feeleth ease in the other: is glad of the one, and sorowed in ỹ other: yet the lord is al one, towards them in both, and loueth theym nolesse when he sufferethe theym to be beaten, yea and to be put to bodelye death, then when he worketh wonderes for their maruelous deliuery.

May rather he doth more for them when in anguish of the torments he standeth by them & strengthneth them in their faith, to suffer in the confession of the truethe and his faithe, the bitter panges of death, then when he openeth the prison doore and letteth them go lose: for here he doth but respit thē to an other time, and leaueth them in daunger to fall in like peryl agayne: and there he maketh theym

perfect

perfect, to be without daũger, payne, or peril after that for euer more. But this his loue towardes theym, howe soeuer the world doth iudge of it, is all one, both when he deliuereth and when he suffereth theym to be put to death. He loued as wel Peter & Paul when, after thei had (according to his blessed wil, pleasure and prouidence) finished their courses, and done their seruices appointed them by him here in preaching of his Gospell, the one was beheaded, and thother was hanged or crucified of the cruell tyraunte Nero, as the Ecclesiasticall history saythe: as when he sent the Aungell to bring Peter out of prison, and for Paules deliuery, he made all ỹ doores of the prison to flie wide open, and ỹ foundation of the same like an earth quake to tremble and shake.

Thinkest thou O thou man of god, that Christ our Sauiour had lesse affection to the fyrste martyr Stephen, bicause he suffered his enemies euen at the firste conflicte to stone him to death? No suerlye, nor James Johns

brother, whiche was one of the three that Paul calleth Primates or Principals amongst ẏ Apostles of Christe. He loued him neuer a whit ẏ worse then he did the other, although he suffered Herod the tyrants sword to cut of his head. Nay doth not Daniel say speaking of the cruelty of Antechrist his time: Et docti in populo docebunt plurimos, & ruent in gladio, & in flamma, & in captiuitate, & in rapina dierum &c. Et de eruditis ruent vt cõflentur & eligãtur & dealbentur, &c. That is, and the lerned (he meaneth truly learned in gods law) shal teach many, and shal fal vpon the sworde, and in the flame (that is, shalbe burned in the flaming fyer) and in captiuitye (that is, shalbe in prison, and be spoiled and robbed of their goods for alonge season). And after a lyttel in the same place of Daniel it foloweth: and of the lerned ther be, whiche shal fal or be ouerthrowen ẏ they maye be knowen, tried, chosen, & made white: he meaneth, be burnyshed and scoured a new, picked and chosen, & made freshe and lustye. Yf that then was

Daniel. 11.

foresene

foreſene for to be done to the godlye lerned, and for ſo gracious cauſes, let euery one to whome any ſuch thinge by the wyll of God doeth chaunce, be mery in God, and reioyce, for it is to Gods glory and to hys owne euerla-ſtinge wealth. Wherefore well is he ẏ euer he was borne; for whome thus graciouſlye God hath prouided, hauinge grace of God and ſtrenghe of the holy ghoſte to ſtande ſtedfaſtly in the height of the ſtorme. Happy is he that euer he was borne, whom God his heauenly father hath vouchſafed to appointe to glorify him, & edifie his church by ẏ effuſion of his bloud. To die in Chriſtes cauſe is an hyghe honour, to the which no man certain-lye ſhall or can eſpire, but to whome god vouchſafeth that dignitie: for no man is alowed to preſume for to take vnto himſelfe any office of honoure, but he whiche is there vnto called of god. Therfore Iohn ſayth wel, ſpea-king of them whiche haue obteyned the victory by the bloud of the lambe and by the worde of hys teſtimonye, Apoc. 12.

that they loued not their lyues, euen vnto death. And our sauiour Christe sayeth, he that shall lose hys lyfe for my cause shall finde it. And this maner of speache pertayneth not to one kind of christians, as the worldly do wyckedly dreame, but to all that doe truly pertain vnto Christ. For when christ had called vnto him the multitude together wyth hys dysciples, he saide vnto them (marke ỹ he said not this to ỹ disciples and apostles only, but he said it to al) whosoeuer wil folow me let him forsake or deny hĩself & take vp his crosse and folow me: for whosoeuer wil saue his life shal lose it (he meaneth whosoeuer wil to saue his lyfe, bothe forsake or leaue him & his trueth) and whosoeuer shall lose his life for my cause and the gospels sake, shal saue it: for what shal it profit a man if he shal winne the whole worlde and lese his owne soule? hys owne life? or what shall a man geue to recompence that losse of his owne life and of his owne soule? Whosoeuer shall be ashamed of me and my

wordes (that is to confesse me and my gospell) before this adulterous & sinful generation, of him shal the son of man be ashamed when he cõmeth in the glory of his father, with the holy aungels. Know thou O man of god, that all thinges are ordeyned for thy behofe, and to the furtherãce of thee, towardes thy saluation. All thinges (saith Paule) worketh with the good to goodnes, euen the enemies of god, and such kind of punishments wherby they go about to destroye theym, shall be forced by Goddes power, might, and fatherly prouidence, for to do them seruyce.

It is not as the wycked thinketh, that pouertie, aduersity, sycknes, tribulation, yea paynefull death of the godly, be tokens that God doeth not loue theym: but euen cleane the contrary, as al the whole course of scripture doth euedently declare: for then he wold neuer haue suffred his most deare beloued ỹ Patriarches to haue had such troubles, his prophetes, his Apostles, his Martyrs and chiefe chã

ptons and maintainers of his trueth and gospell, so cruelly of the wycked to haue ben murdered and slain. Of the which some were racked (as the apostle sayth) and would not be deliuered, that they might receiue a better resurrection. Some were tried by mockings and scourgings, yea moreouer by bondes and imprisonmente: they were stoned, they were hewen and cut in sunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the swoord, they wandered vppe and downe in sheepe skins and Goates skinnes, being forsaken, afflicted and tormented, suche men as the worlde was not worthye to haue, wandringe in wildernesses, in mountaines, in dennes and caues of earth. All these were approued by the testimony of fayth, and receiued not the promise, because god did prouide better for vs, that without vs they should not be consumated. They tary now for vs vndoubtedly lōging for the day. But they are commaunded to haue pacience yet, sayeth the lord, a litle while, vntil the number

of

of their fellowe seruauntes be fulfilled, and of their brethren whych are yet to be slaine, as they were.

Now thou O man of God, for our Lords sake, let vs not for the loue of this life, tary them to longe, and be occasion of delay of that glorious cō-summation, in hope and expectacion whereof thei departed in the lord, and the which also ỹ liuing endued with Gods spirit, ought so earnestly to desire and to grone for with al the creatures of God. Let vs all with Iohn the seruant of God, cry in our harts vnto our sauiour Christ: Veni domine Iesu, come Lorde Iesu come. For then when christ which is our life, shalbe made manifest and apeare with him in glory, thē shal the children of god appeare what thei be, euen like vnto Christ: for this our weake body shall be tranſfygurated and made lyke vn to Christes glorious body, & that by the power wherby he is able to subdue vnto himself all thinges. Then, that which is now corruptible, shall be made incorruptible: that is nowe

vyle, shal thē be made glorions, that is nowe weake, shal rise then mighty and strong, that is grosse and carnal, shalbe made fine and spirituall, for thē we shal see & haue ỹ vnspeakable ioy and fruition of the glorious maiesty of our lorde euen as he is.

Who or what then shall let vs to leopard, to leopard: yea to spend this life which we haue here in Christes cause: in our lorde God his cause: O thou therefore man of god, thou that arte loden and so letted lyke vnto a great bellied woman, that thou canst not fly the plague, yet if thou lust after such things as I haue spoken of, stand fast what soeuer shall befall in thy maysters cause: and take thys thy letting to fly, for a calling of god to feighte in thy maister Christe hys cause. Of this be thou certaine, they can do nothing vnto thee, which thy father is not aware of, or hathe not foresene before: they can do no more then it shal please him to suffer them to do for the furtheraunce of his glory, edifyinge of his church and thyne

owne

owne ſaluation. Lette them then doe what they ſhal, ſeing to thee O man of God, all thinges ſhall be forced to ſerue, and to worcke with thee vnto the beſt before God. O be not afraide and remember the ende.

All thys whiche I haue ſpoken for the comfort of the lamentable caſe of the man whō chriſt calleth the great bellied woman: I meane to be ſpokē likewiſe to the captiue and priſoner in Gods cauſe: for ſuche I count to be as it were already ſummoned and preſſed to fight vnder the banner of the croſſe of Chryſte, and as it were ſouldiours allowed and taken vp for the Lords warres, to do to their lord and maiſter good and honorable ſeruice, and to ſtycke to him as men of truſtie ſeruice in his cauſe euen vnto death, and to thinke their life loſt in his cauſe, is to winne it in eternall glory for euermore.

Therefore now to conclude and to make an ende of this treatiſe, I ſaye vnto all that loue God our heauenly father, that loue Chriſte Ieſus oure

redemer

redemer and Sauioure: that loue to folowe the wayes of the holy ghoste, which is our comforter and sanctifier of all: vnto all that loue Christes spouse and body, the true catholicke churche of Christe, yea that loue their ether owne soules health: I say vnto all theis, harken my deare brethē and sisters, all you that be of God, of all sortes, ages, dignities, or degree: harken to the worde of our sauioure Jesus Christe spoken to his Apostels and ment to all his in Saincte Mathewes Gospell: Feare not them which kyll the bodye, for they can not kil the soule: but feare him more which maie destroye and caste both bodye and soule into hell fyer. Are not two small sparrowes sold for a mite, and one of them shal not fal or light vpon the ground without your father: All the hears of your head be numbred. Feare them not, you are much more worth then are the littel sparrowes. Euery one then that confesseth me before mē, him shal I likwise confesse before my father which

Math. 10.

is in heauen. But whosoeuer shal denye me before men, I shall denye him likewyse before my father whyche is in heauen.

The lord graunt vs therfore of his heauenly grace & strength, that here we may so confesse him in this world amongest this adulterous and sinfull generation, that he maye confesse vs again at the latter day, before his father which is in heauen, to his glory and our euerlasting comforte, ioy and saluation.

To our heauēly father, to our sauiour & redemer Jesus Christ, and to the holy ghost, be al glory and honor now and for euer

Amen.

(·.·)

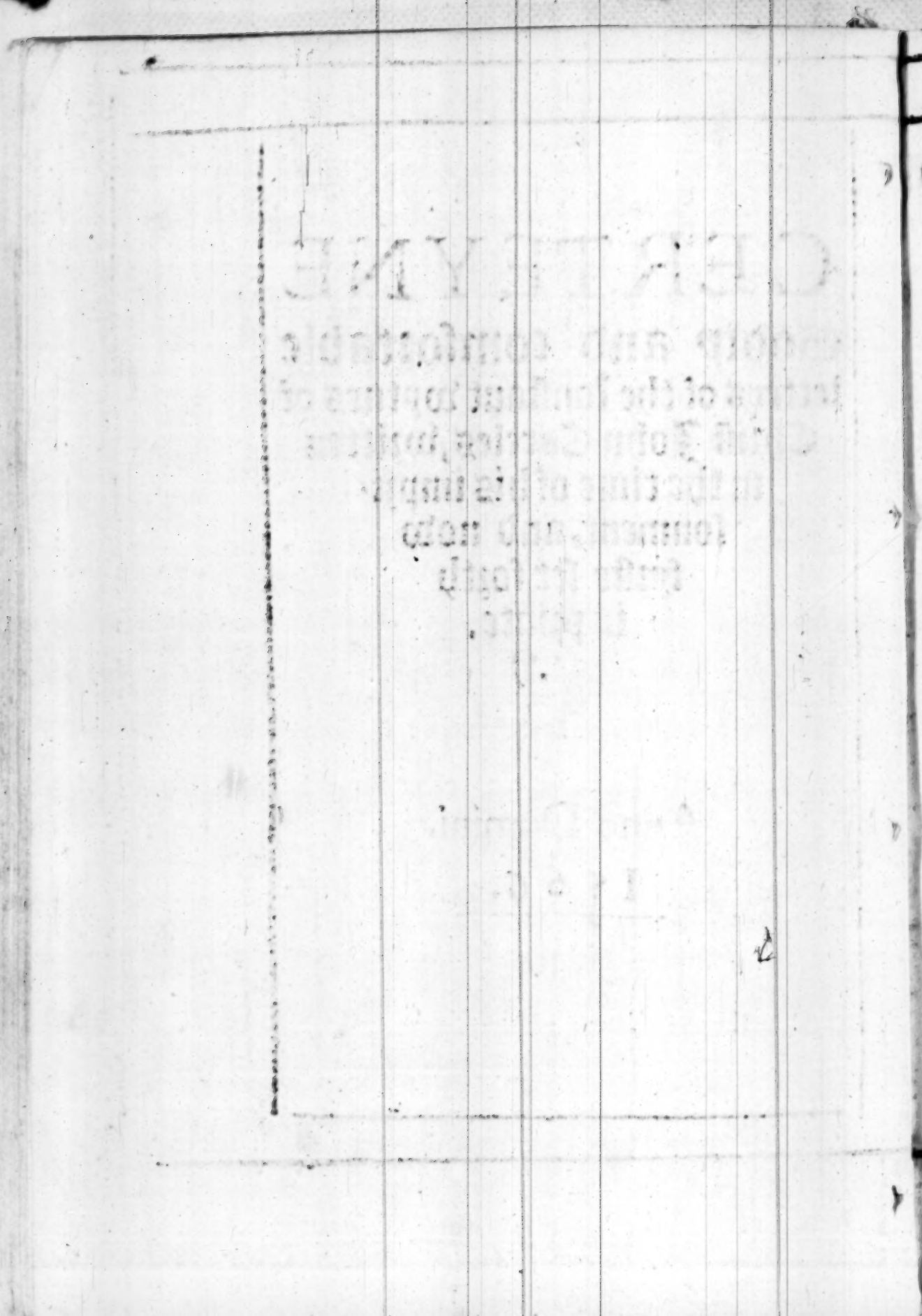
CERTEYNE

Godly and comfortable letters of the constaut wytnes of Christ John Careles, written in the time of his imprisonment, and now fyrste set forth in printe.

(·.·)

Anno Domini.

1566.



Thomas Perry to the Christian reader, in commendacion of that worthy man of god John Careles.

MUch care did carefull Careles bide,
in time of Romishe rage:
whē flesh & bloud with fier was tried,
to make mennes faith to swage.

But god be thanked for his grace,
who did him so defende:
that in the truth he ran his race,
and made a godly ende.

No man more carefull for the crosse,
of Christe his sauinge health:
no man more careles for the losse,
of frendes and worldly wealth.

When he was hated and abhorde,
of Cayphas and his sede:
he cast his care vpon the Lorde,
and Careles was in dede.

For why? he knewe that worldly power,
no farther coulde procede:
then god, whose worde doth still endure,
already had decrede.

And that the Lorde would in the ende,
worke all things for the best:
when of great mercy he shoulde sende,
his soule to ioyfull rest,

In hope wherof he careles was,
and ready to the stake:
if god so wouldе, he did not passe:
such ende on earth to make.

But gods will was he should not die,
such death in open sighte:
wherefore in prison ioyfully,
to Christ he yelde his spirite.

Psalme. 54.

Caste thy care vpon the lorde: and he shall nourysshe thee, he will not suffer the righteous to fall for euer.

¶ The grace and free mercy of God in Jesus Christ, the swete consolations of the holy ghost, the guide of all Gods dere children be with you, strengthen and comforte you my derely beloued swete sister K. E. nowe & euer. Amen.

ALL be it, my derly beloued syster in Christe, that as yet we dyd neuer see one an other personally to any knowledge, yet by the vertuous reporte, that I haue heard of you, and also by the large louynge token that I haue receaued frō you, my thinke that I doe euen presently see you, & beholde your person, faithfully walkinge in the feare and loue of god, ioying and reioycing with you in ỹ spirite as though we were swetly talkynge together of Christes veritie. The lorde god do I humbly beseech in the bowels and bloude of our lorde and sauyour Jesus Christ, that he will strengthen vs both, wyth hys holy and mighty spirit, that we may constantly continue in the confession

of his truth vnto the ende: that lyke as we nowe see one another presently in spirite, we may also see one another personally in the glorious presence of God, and his holye aungels. Where vndoutedly, we shal know one an others personage, to oure greate ioy, felicity, and endles comfort. And now therfore deare sister K. be strong in the Lord our god, for doubtles the time of trial is at hande: a great persecution with cruell murtherynge of gods deare saincles is like to be very shortly in this wofull wicked realme of England. Therfore dere sister, for the loue of God, prepare you to the crosse with all diligence, and make your selfe ready to die with Christe, that you may also liue with hym for euer. There is no remedy, if you wil be Christes disciple, you muste nedes take vp your crosse, and follow him, for the disciple must not loke to be aboue his master, nor the seruaunt to be better intreated, then his lord. Yf we were of the world (good sister) no doubt the worlde would loue vs.

But

But for as much as Christ hath chosen vs out of the worlde to serue God in spirite and veritye, let vs be well assured the worlde will hate vs & persecute vs, as it hath done our lorde & master Chrysste. But yet let vs be of good chere, for Christ hath ouercome the worlde. The payne is but shorte that we can fele here, but the plesure is perpetuall that we shall feele els where. Let vs set before vs the exãple of Christe, which abode the crosse and despised the shame, in respect of the ioy that was set before him: Euẽ so let vs consider, for whose sake wee suffer, whose cause we defend, & what glorious reward we shal haue at the day of our victory, and then doubtles the consolation of these thinges will make sweete all our sufferinges, and sone swallow vp al the sorowes that we are sowsed in for Goddes sake. I could recite diuers texts of the scripture to confirme this poynt. But I nede not, for I am well assured that you do know them most perfectly all ready. The lorde geue you strength &

assiste you with his holy spirite, that you maye continuallye walcke in all points accordig to your godly knowledge: And then shall you not doe as the moste parte of our Gospellers doe nowe a dayes, the more is the pitie. There are a greate manye in Englande, that doe perfectly knowe, that the idolatrous masse is abhominable, diuelyshe and detestable in the sighte of God. And yet, alas they be not afrayde to pollute and defyle theyr bodies, whych ought to be the tẽples of the holy ghost, with being present at it, so synning agaynst God and their owne conscience. But dere syster K. doe you flie from it, both in body and soule, as you would flie from the very diuell himselfe. Drinke not of the whore of Babylons cup by no meanes, for it will infecte the body & poyson the soule. Be not partakers of her sinnes (saith the aungell) least you be partakers of the plagues, that shortly shalbe powred vpon her. O what an araye is this? that so manye that knowe gods truth, will nowe tourne

agayne

agayne and defyle them ſelues in the filthy puddle of antichriſtes ſtinking religiõ. They go about to ſaue their liues with their double diſſimulatiõ, but doubtles, they ſhall loſe euerlaſting life by it, if they do not repente in time and turne vnto the lord. But deare ſiſter, my truſte is, that you doe vtterly abhorre the comminge to any ſuch thinge. I hope that you wil not by anye meanes turne backe into Egypte nowe, but that you wil boldly venter through the wildernes of troble & perſecution, that you may come into the lande that floweth wyth all kinde of heauenly pleaſures & ioyfull delectatiõs, and poſſeſſe the ſame for euer. Let vs cõſider, howe that euery one of vs doth owe vnto god a death by nature, and howe ſone the Lorde will require it of vs, we knowe not. O howe happy are we then, if god of his goodneſſe appoint vs to paye natures det with ſuffringe for his truth and Goſpelles ſake, and ſo makynge vs his faythfull wytneſſes wyth the prophetes, apoſtles, martyres, & confeſſours,

fellours, yea with his dearly beloued ſonne Jeſus Chriſt, to whom he doth here begin to faſhion vs lyke in ſuffe-rynge, that we might be like him alſo in glory. Thus my derely beloued ſiſter, I haue ben bold to trouble you a littel with my rude and ſimple letter, beinge made in haſte as it doeth apeare. Yet I deſier you to take it in good woorthe, as a token of my poore zeale vnto you, & to accepte my good will. And if it pleaſe god to ſpare me life and libertye. I truſte hereafter to write vnto you more largelye. Fare ye well deare ſiſter K. E. the Lorde bleſſe you and all youres, and powre vpon you the heauenlye dewe of hys grace. The lord endue you with plen tifull knowledge of his veritye, and fill you with his holye and mightye ſpirite, that you may continually re-ioyce in the cõforte of the ſame now and euer. Amen. Praye, pray, praye, with ſtedfaſt fayth.

Your daily Orator Jhon Careles priſoner of the Lorde at al times abydinge hys moſt merciful will and pleaſure.

Another letter of the same Iohn Careles sent to the same party.

¶ Grace, mercy and peace, from god our eternall and most deere louing father, with quyetnes of conscience in our swete lorde and only sauiour Iesus Chryst, with increase of knowledge, health, strength, and spiritual ioy in and through the mighty operatiō of the holy ghost our euerlastinge comforte, be with you nowe and euer, my moste dere & louing sister K. E. to the good performance of all that he hathe so graciously begon in you, in such sort as may be moste to his glorye, the comforte of hys poore afflicted churche, and to the encrease of your owne euerlastinge ioy in him. Amen.

AS I am by no meanes able, (my deere harte in the lord) in the leaste pointe to recompence anye part of the greate loue, faithfull frēdship & manifolde kindnes, that you haue so largely extended vnto me: euen so am I not able to declare, how much, and how depelye I am continuallye

bound to geue god moſt hũble prayſe and continuall thankes for you, and on your behalfe. Before God I ſpeak it, I can not with pen expreſſe what ioy and comforte my poore afflycted hart hath conceyued of you, and that in mo reſpectes then I wyll or can now declare. Ah my deare ſyſter K. whoſe humble hart and lowly ſpirit doth to me preſẽtly appeare in youre moſt godly and louing letter, bleſſed are you, and all ſuch meke handmaides of ỹ lord. For doubtles you ſhall be exalted in that day, when ỹ proud perſones of the world, and hygh minded Pharaſeys ſhall be caſt downe. God for euermore bee bleſſed, who hath geuen you (contrary to nature) ſuch a meke & humble hart. For vpõ al ſuch (he ſaith himſelf) his holy ſpirit ſhal reſt, which promis is ful wel verified on you: which holy ſpirite of his, is the good guide and leader, yea the only teacher and inſtructer of all the lordes deare electe children. And as it hath truly taught you to caſte your ſelfe down (as it is moſt conue-

nient)

nient) euen so will it rayse you vp a-gayne (as I doubt not but it hath al-ready done, and set you vppon a high rocke of stone, wheron you shal stand sure, and dwell safe for euer: I meane vppon Iesus Christe, on whom your fayth is fyrmely built, so that the ga-tes of death or hell, shall not finallye preuaile against the same. Selah, But as I do righte well on your parte ad-mit the similytude of ỹ faythful wife of Cana, which came to Christ for to haue her daughters helth, wyth whō you may be well compared, bothe for fayth, and humble mekenes: euen so I wyll in no wyse allowe, that you should so much exalt me (a moste vyle wretched sinner, yea slime, earth, and asshes, and a verye lumpe of Adams dunge) as thoughe there were some thinge in me, in respecte wherof you should thinke your selfe vnworthy to call me brother. Alas, what am I (in respecte of my selfe) but a depe and a damnable sinner, yea suche a one, as daily doth deserue not only this long enprisonment, and death which now

knocketh

knocketh at my doze, but also Gehenna and hell fier, if God foz his sonne Chzisse his sake did not fozgeue the same, I meane my sin, which partlye hath pzouoked God to plage all thys Realme. Therfoze my deare sister, if you thinke your self vnwozthy to cal me bzother, let it be only in respecte that I am mosse vnwozthye of that name. Otherwise you must consider, that you maye (and I trust dailye do) boldly call Jesus Chzyst the eternall sonne of God your most deare and loving bzother, who by his death hath bzought you life, and hath made you the childe of God, and felowe heyze with him, of the kingdome of heauē, whither he is also ascended foz your possession takinge, and hath thereto left with you in pledge his pure and holy spirit, as a sure earnest penye of the same, wherwith I am right suer we are bothe sealed vnto the daye of redemption. That spirite certifyeth our spirit, that we are the true adopted sonnes of God, and therefoze we maye boldlye call him deare father:

then

then muſt I nedes be youre brother, and ſo I pray you cal mee: god make me worthy of that name. And where as you deare hart, do deſier to be refreſhed wyth the fruitfull water of life, which floweth forth of the holye ghoſt, the fountain of al grace: I ſay with Chriſt that bleſſed is your hungry ſoule, for it ſhall be wel ſatiſfied with that heauenly manna, which maketh the eaters thereof to liue for euermore. For God hath geuen you his ſpirite, which hath taught, and doth ſtill teach you, what you ought to beleue, and how to lyue according to the ſame, as hitherto you haue done, youre light ſo ſhininge before men, that god hath ben and is greatlye glorified by the ſame. Therefore be you certaine & ſuer, that God will likewiſe glorify you with him ſelf in euerlaſting glory. For as ỹ lord did know and elect you for his before the foundation of the worlde was layde: ſo hath he called you by the ſyncere preaching of his holy goſpel. And as he hath truly called you, ſo doeth he

moſt

moste mercyfullye iustifye you of his free grace and fauor. And as he doeth iustifye you, or repute you righteous in his syghte: so wyll he glorify you with a crowne of immortality in his kingdome for euer. Read the eight to the Romaines for your consolation: and put your truste in God, who careth for you, and will kepe you in his safe custody, free from all the assaultes of your cruel aduersarie: thoughe in hys myscheuous members he doe transforme himself into an aungel of light, moste craftelye to deceaue, yea euen the very elect, if it were possible for him so to do. I perceaue dear sister K. that you haue met wͤ some of the greuous wolues, whych are fearslye entred in amongest the sely sheepe of Christ to scatter them. I knowe well that you haue bene sore assaulted of the Papistes. But I am sure they shall not preuayle agaynst you. For their cruel tyranny and all the rest of their diuelyshe doinges, is so directly against the word of God in all poyntes, that they can not beguyle you

though

thoughe they woulde neuer so fayne. Perchaunce you haue also bene troubled with oure spronge vp heretykes the Arrians and Anabaptistes. God keepe you and all hys deare chyldren forth of theyr wycked companye: for verily they are a crafty kinde of men, and many a gentle harte and symple soule, they do full sore abuse, & depely deceyue, bryngyng them far from the sincere fayth of Christe, and from the pure vnderstanding of his holy word, though in their outward appearance they would seme as holy as any flatteryng frier. If any such come about you to perswade you from that euerlasting truth, which was taught you in the dayes of oure late good kynge Edwarde, by those worthy witnesses whych haue sealed ỹ same wyth their bloud: let thē not come wythin your dores, neither bid thē once god spede, If I were sure that any suche blynde prophetes did go about to lead you in to the dike of darknes, I wold take a litle more paine for your sake. I haue sente vnto my good brother Henry

Iones

Jones of Witney, a true and christiã confession of my faith, the whiche I would wishe you to reade, and in all points to be ruled thereby. My good brother Richard Brice will help you to it well inough: I haue spoken to him and to my brother Henrye also. Ah deare sister, these be the daungerous dayes, in which Christ did prophecye, and Paule, and Peter also, that manye false Prophetes shoulde appeare, & bring in damnable sectes, euen denying the lorde that boughte them, as these diuelishe Arrians do, in denying Jesus Christ to be theternall son of God, of one substance and equal with the father. But my deare hart in the lord be of good chere. For though this tyme of darkenes, be neuer so daungerous to the cage of vncleane and hatefull birdes, that can not abide the light, that is to say, the congregation of Sathan whiche had no lust to beleue the truth, and therfore God hath sent them stronge deluslon to beleue lyes: yet the sure grounde of God, remayneth still, and

hath

hath his ſeale, which is the ſpirite of trueth: The lord knoweth them that are his, and hath committed them vn to Chriſte his keping, who will loſe nothinge of that whiche his father hath geuen hym, but will raiſe it vp at the laſt day. yea for his choſē ſake, the Lorde hath ſaide, theſe ſorowful dayes ſhalbe ſhortned, of which moſt happy number, whoſe names are regiſtred in the booke of life, my firme faith is, that you are one, as by your ſtedfaſt faith, and fruits of the ſame, it doth appeare. And wheras you ſay that my ſimple letters haue bene a ſtay and comfort to you, I am moſte glad therof, & do moſt hartely prayſe God therfore: that God of his greate mercy will vſe me poore miſer of the worlde, as his inſtrument or meane to doe good to anye one of hys deare ſaincts. And I do moſte hartely deſier you to forgeue mee my great neglygence towardes you, in that I haue not more oftner written letters to you, ſeing that you do ſo well eſteme them as you do. But if god ſpare me

lyfe,

life, I wyll be a litteli moze diligent to wzite vnto you, then heretofoze I haue bene. And as foz my poze pzayer, as you haue bene, so shal you continually be sure of it. I truste you doe also remember me in youres, as your large and louing dedes do declare no lesse. Ah good syster what doe you meane to sende me so rich a token. Alas you make me sozy to se how carefull you are foz me, and what greate cost you haue bestowed vppon me a most vnpzofitable member in Chzistes church. But verily I do perceiue whereaboute you go. You are minded to bzing God a great deale into your debt, and to put your money vnto a godly vsury, accozding to the sainge of the wise man: He that hath pitye vpon the poze (saith he) lendeth vnto the lozd, and loke what he laieth out, it shalbe paid him againe. The lozde recompence your pitiful hert, which is so carefull foz the childzen of God in the time of their captiuity. God be blessed who hath made you so chereful in geuinge, and diligent in well

doing.

ding, for verely the time is at hand, that you shal reap without ceasing, the fruit of eternall life. Therfore be of good chere, for they that now sow their good sede with teares, shal thē reap their full sheues with gladnes, and god shal wipe al teares frō their eyes for euer. Cast all your care vpon the lord, and commit your soule and body vnto him as vnto a faithful creator: for doubtles deare sister, he cōtinuallye kepeth you, and careth for you. The moste and principall thing that God requireth of you, is, that you be fullye perswaded, that he careth for you, and that he is your god and most deare louinge father, and wilbe so for euer. Without this faith and true perswasion, you can not please him, you can not commit and betake your selfe wholye vnto hym, you can not truly feare him, or loue him in dede, you can not call vpon him, or hartely pray vnto him. Therfore let this be your alone and continuall endeuor, to be confirmed more and more of this, that God is youre

most deare louinge faher, throughe Jesus Christ, that he hath a most tēder care ouer you and for you, as alwaies he hath had, and alwais wil haue, both in soule and body, for this lyfe and for eternall lyfe, howsoeuer thinges appeare and seme vnto you. According as you beleue, so shal it be vnto you, and as you think God wil bee vnto you, so shall you fele hym: Think therfore swetelye of the lorde and his goodnes, and pray for the encrease of faith, whiche God graunte vnto vs both for his mercies sake. Amen. Thus, most deare and faithfull sister, for this time I make an ende, commyttinge you and all yours, to Goddes most mercifull defence, who blesse, kepe, and preserue you, nowe and for euermore Amen. Fare you well in Christ good sister.

Your pore brother and daily Orator Jhon Careles prisoner of the Lorde at al time abyding hys most merciful wil and plesure. pray, pray.

An other letter sent frō the same John Careles to the selfe same woman.

¶ The euerlasting peace of GOD in Iesus Christ, the continuall aide and strength, ioye and comforte of his most puer, holy, & mighty spirit, with the encrease of faith and liuely felinges of his eternal mercies, be most effectuously wrought in your hart, and grauen in your mind, my deare frend and faithful louing sister K. E. to the full finishing of all the good workes which he hath most graciously begon in you, that the same (by al meanes) may be to the setting forth of Gods glorye, the commodity of his poore afflicted Church and to youre owne euerlastinge comforte in him. Amen

AS the dailye occasions whyche happen to me, deare sister in the lord, puttinge me in remembraunce of my moste happy departure and final deliuerāce to be at hand. do moue

my poze hart to much ſpiritual mirth and gladnes in the lozd, euen ſo doth the daily remembzance of you, and o-ther the deare ſaincles of God (whom I ſhall leaue behynde mee) engender much ſozow and ſadnes, euen to my very ſoule, to ſe in what a miſerable wozlde you muſt remaine, ſubiect to our deſerued plages bothe ſpirituall and tẽpozal. In reſpect wherof, as I daily make mention of you in my cõ-tinual pzayers, that God wil pzotect you vnder the wynges of hys mercy, from al things that may be hurtfull eyther to ſoule oz bodye: ſo haue I thought it good, yea, & my very boun den duty, to wzite theſe few lines vn to you, as well to comfozt you, what ſoeuer croſſe it ſhal pleaſe the Lozde to lay vpõ you, as alſo to warne you to walke circumſpectly, as the chylde of light, leaſt at any time the darke-nes ſhould ouertake you, as it is like to doe thoſe fooliſhe virgins, whiche haue let their lampes go out alredy, ẏ bzidegromes cõming being ſo nigh at hand, as ſuerly it is not far hence,

as

as it appeareth both by ỹ prophecies of the holy scriptures, & also by daily exãples, wherof we haue experience. God for his Christes sake geue vs al grace diligently to watch and pray, that we maye be readye prepared for that longe desired daye. Amen. My deare sister K. cal to your remẽbrance alwaye the great loue and mercifull kindnes that God your most deare louing father hathe from time to time extended vnto you, specially in that he would vouchesafe to geue for you his owne only & dearly beloued son, in whome was and is all his whole pleasure and delighte, vnto the verye death of the crosse, yea and that whẽ you were his very enemy, the childe of wrath, the bonde seruaunt of Sathan, and a very firbrand of hel, and should haue so remained for euer. Cõsider also, howe he hathe geuen you with his swete sonne, al thinges necessary either for bodye or soule, yea all that euer is in heauen and earth, and hath made you by him, heire vnto himselfe, and owner and possessor

of al that euer he hath. In consideratiõ wherof, you ought so to loue him againe, that nothinge should be able to seperate you from him: yea of very loue only you ought to serue him in such holines and righteousnes, as is accept before him, all the dayes of youre life: and also to abstaine moste willinglye, from all thinges that be detestable in his sighte, what daunger so euer shoulde ensue to you for the same. But in dede, my dear hart, to be plaine with you, I doe heare to my great grief that the due consideration of this greate loue and infinite mercy of god, hath not yet effectuously wrought al these aforesaid things in you, according to my long expectation: but it is enformed me by credible persons that you, notwithstanding the great loue of God towards you, and the excellent knowledge he hath so graciouslye geuen you before many other, doe yet manye times defile your faith, or mariage garment, with comming into the companye of filthy idolaters, at the time of theyr

Ante

Antechꝛiſtian ſeruice. Trulye if it be ſo, it is a token that the great abundant bottomles loue & mercy of God towardes you, hath not yet in ſuche ſoꝛte ben conſidered of you, that it hath (as it ought to haue done) ſwalowed vp all the vaine loue of the woꝛlde. Ah, where is true faith become, and liuely feling of Gods mercy, that were wont to make the chilꝺꝛen of god diligent to kepe Goddes commaundementes, and merilye to beare his croſſe? But perchaunce you do not thinke it a bꝛeaking of Gods commaundementes, to goe to the Idols temple, and to bee pꝛeſent with the papiſtes at their ſuperſticious ſeruice. &c. But god fozbid you ſhould be ſo ignoꝛãt, after ſo many inſtructiõs, in ſo great & weightye a matter. Foꝛ ſurely the vnknowen ſickneſ is moſt daungerous euermoꝛe, as experience teacheth. But I verily thinke, at the leaſt wiſe I hope, that youre knowe-ledge is ſo great in theſe things, that the daunger in being partaker with the wicked, is not hid frõ your eyes.

There-

Therfore your fault is so muche the greater, & the sorer punishmēt is due for the same. But my vndoubted trust is, that almighty God our most deare louinge father, wyll not leaue you in your weakneſſe, but wil rayse you vp agayne, by true and earneſt repentance, and geue you ſuch grace and ſtrength of his ſpirit, that henceforth you ſhalbe ſo far from cominge to anye of theyr abhominable ſuperſtition, that you ſhall be able well to perſuade this bearer, and many other the ſainctes of God from the ſame. I knowe deare harte that thys thinge which I requier of you, wil bryng a greate croſſe vnto you, as well at the handes of your huſband, as of many other your worldly frendes and foes. But let not that diſcourage you any thing at all, ſyth you are one of the choſen children of God, to whom hys croſſe doth ſpecially belonge. Let not tribulation for righteouſneſſe ſake, ſeme a ſtraunge thing vnto you: but rather reioyce and be glad, that God will vouche you worthye of ſo great

dignity

dignity. For truly it is the greatest honor, that God can bringe his elect vnto in this mortall life: I meane to make them his witnesses to ȳ world, and to make them worthye to suffer for his sake, which thinge is not permitted to the highest Angell in heauen: albeit I beleue they wolde more reioyce thereof, then in all the glorye they haue. Oh whye are we then so loth to come to this great promotiō, seing it is the verye ordinance of god vppon all his deare chyldren, as S. Paule affirmeth, saying: To you it is geuen not only that you should beleue in Iesus Christ, but also that you should suffer for his sake. Again he saith: all that will liue godlye in Christ Iesu, must suffer persecution. Oh what cause haue we to reioice, if it please God, by suffringes to make vs some thing cōformable to the passions of our swete Christ, who fyrste suffred for vs, and afterward entred into his glorye? Wee haue in thys world nothing so much to reioice in, as that we are made meete to be vn-

der

der the crosse with Christ. For therby are we assured, not onlye that the glorious spirite of god resteth vpon vs, but also that we shall reign with Christe, and bee glorifyed together with him, who hathe testified with his owne mouth, that they be blessed which suffer persecution for righteousnes sake, for theirs (saieth he) is the kingedome of heauen: into the which we must also enter by manye tribulatiõs. Happy is he (saith christ) that endureth to thend. Be faithfull vnto death (saith the holy ghoste) & I will geue thee a crowne of life. &c. But what mean I to make so long a circũstance vnto you, my deare hart, who knoweth al these things as wel or better then I? Oh that you hadde the grace and strẽgth to do al things accordinge to youre knowledge: I meane, concerning the fleing frõ Idolatry, and suffering for the truth. As for al other things, I know you are vnspotted, praised be god for you. Oh that you durste pledge me of the same cup, (if need do requier) wherof

Apoc. 2.

the

the lord of our glory hath not refused himself to drinke before vs, and hath left vs an example to folow his fotesteps, that he might crowne vs wyth his owne glorye, and most precious giftes. Oh lord helpe thy deare childzen that wold faine come vnto the, and loke not narowly vpõ our sins, which are the cause of oure long absence from thee, but couer theym for thy Christes sake, with the mantell of thy manifold mercies, whyche far surmounteth al thy workes, that we may not be ashamed, but reioyce at thy most glorious comming, ỹ which do thou hasten according to thy promise, for thy chosens sake. We haue deare sister, bene of longe season acquainted with this earthlye old man of ours to much, which is ful of sin, and pressеth downe sore our vnderstãding, that it is needful for vs to be tried throughe manye trybulations, that the rust therof myght be worne awaye, that we might be made mete vessels for the lordes owne vse, and be sanctifyed to honour. Happy is he

that

that endureth chastisinge. Whyche blessing (my good sister) God offereth vnto vs at this present, yea, and him selfe also as our moste deere louinge father. Let vs willingly embrace him therfore, and geue thankes vnto his name, that hath triumphantly gottē victorye ouer al our ennemies, and is now pleading our cause on the right hand of God his father, in the kyngdome of heauen, where he kepeth possession for vs. To whom if we direct oure eyes wyth a stedfast fayth, wee shal not nede to feare, neither death, synne, nor hell, for theyr whole power is taken awaye, and Christes righteousnes maketh aūswer for vs. Yea he is wholy ours with al his merites, mercies and moste swete sufferinges, and we are his for euermore: so that we may boldly say, the lord is our helpe, and therfore we wyll not feare what man maye do vnto vs, for he is but flesh, and his breath is in hys nostrels: but the strengthe of the lord, and the power of his word endureth for euer: vnto the whyche let vs

stedfastly

ſtedfaſtly truſt, & then ſhal we not be confounded. My deare frend & faithful ſiſter K. thynke no vnkyndnes in me, that I write thus boldlye vnto you: for verily it is of pure loue and a true hart that I beare vnto you, as I am moſt depely bound, yea double and treble. I haue plentifully reaped your temporal things, god recõpence you for it. And ought not I thẽ much more to ſow vnto you ſome of thoſe ſpyritual thinges, wherewyth God hath bleſſed me: yes truly: and euerlaſtynge woe and damnation were moſt due and ſuer vnto me, if I did it not. God for his chriſtes ſake, forgeue me my great negligence in thys behalfe towardes you, and al the reſt of hys deare children, whome I loue in the lord, as mine owne ſoule, and thanke God moſt hartelye, that you do me likewyſe, whych am moſt vnworthy of the ſame. God geue me the ſpirite of prayer, that I maye therewith ſupply ſome part of my duty towardes you: for verily I am farre in your debt, and ſo am like to die. But

my

my ſuer truſt is, that my good God, for whoſe ſake I loſe lyfe and goods, and al earthly commodityes, wyl abundantly recompence you wyth his bleſſyng, both ſpirituall and temporal, and in the ende bringe you vnto me, in the place of perpetual ioy and quietnes, where we ſhal reſt from al our labors, and remaine together for euermore. There ſhall we moſt perfectly know one another perſonally: thoughe in thys lyfe we are not like to doe ſo, for I am alredy proclaimed heretike at Paules croſſe, I prayſe god moſt hartily for it. For nowe I know I ſhal ſhortly be with him, for whoſe ſake I am ſo called: and ſhalbe yet more ſolẽnely ỹ ſũday after Trinity ſunday, doctor Harpeſfield ſaith. I thanke him for his paines. For he hath geuen me good warning to prepare my ſelfe ready againſt the daye of ſlaughter: whiche time is not yet in their handes, for all their bragges and proud boſtinges, but in the good wil & determinatiõ of my moſt deare God, and louinge father. And right

ſuer

ſuer I am, that they (I meane my e-nemies) and if al the diuels in hell do helpe theym, can not ſhorten my life one minute of an howre, otherwyſe then GOD hath appoynted, for his glory and my eternal profit. Therefore vpon him wil I caſt all my care, & be careles, according to my name, in ſpite of theym all, and tell them I will, when I come before them, that God doth laughe al their doinges to ſcorne, and ſhortlye wyll bringe all their counſelles to naught, to their owne vtter confuſion, if they be not conuerted. For whiche thing let vs praye to him, whiche onelye is able to doe it, and wyl, when he ſeeth hys good time and pleaſure. In ỹ meane ſpace, the ſame LORDE geue vs hys peace and pacience, with plen tiful conſolation and loye in the holy ghoſt: who gouerne, guyde, lead and conduct vs vnto the very end. Thus yet once agayne I commit you vnto Goddes moſte mercyfull defence, who euer haue you, and all youres, in hys bleſſed keping. The bleſſinge

of

of God be wyth you euermore. Amen.

Youres for euer moste vnfeynedlye, John Careles, prysoner of the Lorde, at all tymes abidinge his most merciful wyl & pleasure. Pray, pray, pray.

FINIS.

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